

**Idaho Fish and Game Commission
Special Meeting
Trophy Room, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
600 South Walnut, Boise, ID**

March 5-6, 2008

Public Meeting

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. Commissioners Tony McDermott, Fred Trevey, Bob Barowsky, Wayne Wright Randy Budge and Gary Power were present.

Chairman Wheeler noted that the Commission takes the public comment seriously and the Commission will review the public comments at the general meeting on March 6th. Chairman Wheeler introduced Representative Bert Stevenson who was in attendance.

Scott Farr, an outfitter from the Middle Fork Lodge, spoke regarding the wolf population and goals. Mr. Farr represents the Outfitters and Guides Licensing Board and is on the seven member panel to help develop the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan. He would like to see a general season with harvest quotas for outfitters for hunting wolves.

Ken Smith, Ahsahka, referenced a letter sent to Commissioner Power regarding Department recommendations for elk. He stated these proposals would create a hardship on his outfitter operation, would like for the Commission to grant the industry time to prepare in advance for these hunts.

Scott Allan, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (SFW) Chairman of the Board, thanked the Department for their leadership and the changes that are occurring to allow sportsmen to interact with the Department and Commission and the openness and transparency they are seeing. Thank you for your responsiveness to the comments on the mule deer plan and the wolf plan. Reduction in the spin factor; elk numbers have been reported as stable not changing, as harvest reports stated.

Mike Murray, Idaho Muzzleloading Association, (IMA) spoke regarding muzzleloader hunts. IMA is upset with the Department release saying that there is no difference between the inline and traditional muzzleloader. He feels the Garden Valley area is seeing problems for elk and is not in favor of controlled hunts for that area.

Lloyd Oldenburg, representing self, and the Idaho Chapter for North American Wild Sheep, stated that FNAWS supports the proposed Department Mule Deer Management Plan and the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan. He stated that predators must be managed also.

Charles Starks, Traditional Muzzleloading Association (TMA), stated that they support wolf delisting, proposes a doe hunt for traditional muzzleloader hunt in Unit 22, would

like to see a fall bear hunt in Unit 22 as well. TMA see no difference between inline and traditional. Mr. Starks provided a flyer showing inline weapons dating back to 1710-1715. They would like the Commission to object to the Department proposal establishing one season for general muzzleloading. Mr. Starks feels this Commission has been more open and does not want to see politics interfere.

Jim Nunley, representing self, is in favor of general season tags or controlled hunts or whatever it takes to reduce the number of wolves. Mr. Nunley is concerned that if the delisting does not go through and the judge rules you can not proceed with the hunt, what are the Commission plans for getting the wolf population under control? Mr. Nunley commends the Commission and Director for doing a great job.

John Barringer representing the Association for More Humane Animal Trapping, spoke regarding changing the trap checking times from 72 hours to 24 hours.

Gary King, Idaho Muzzleloader Association (IMA) stated that they are against loss of traditional muzzleloader hunts, supports more youth hunts and get technology out of the sport.

Jamie Gould, President Idaho Muzzleloader Association (IMA) stated that it will be difficult to have one set of rules for muzzleloaders in this state. He would like for the Commission to keep the existing traditional muzzleloader hunts and feels by keeping these hunts you are appeasing both sides. He would like to see some youth hunts to share knowledge with Idaho youth.

Bill Platts, representing Ada County Fish and Game League, supports the Mule Deer Management Plan, and that the plan will ensure a viable population of mule deer.

Bob Minter, President, Ada County Fish and Game League, supports the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan and the process. They would like for the Department to offer some pilot senior hunts for turkeys, pheasants, deer and elk.

Matt Douthit, representing Deer Hunters of Idaho, stated that the group would like for the Commission to continue the policies that place Idaho Mule Deer recovery as a top priority for the Department. They would like to see changes made to the hunter harvest report to include a question asking if sportsmen were satisfied with their hunt. Deer Hunters of Idaho would like the Department to work with BLM and Forest Service for creating better habitat programs and better OHV usage. Doe harvest is of concern to the group and believes there should only be doe hunts in units that exceed sportsmen objectives.

Grant Simonds, President, Idaho Outfitters and Guides Association (IOGA) spoke regarding deer and elk regulations. Mr. Simonds stated that IOGA is concerned that several controlled elk hunt proposals could significantly reduce hunting opportunities for the outfitted public and impact several small businesses. He noted that small outfitter

businesses need more than a month's notice regarding significant reductions in hunting opportunities. IOGA would like the regulations to go to a biennial system.

Matt Compton, Idaho Sportsmen's Caucus Advisory Council (ISCAC) noted that ISCAC is made up of 31 sportsmen's groups. Mr. Compton noted that ISCAC supports the Mule Deer Management Plan and the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan.

Tom Demorest, Diamond D Ranch in Stanley, referenced a document put out by Defenders of Wildlife titled Save America's Wolves and feels this is distortion put out by the group to the public. Mr. Demorest is in favor of the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan.

Nate Helm, Executive Director, Sportsmen for Fish and Wildlife (SFW), spoke regarding wolves and mule deer. SFW supports the efforts of the Department and Commission to lead out and check the current wolf population as the recovered population they became some time ago. Mr. Helm provided a brief history of the Idaho Sportsmen Mule Deer Conservation and Management Committee meeting May 2007.

Kelton Larsen, Idaho Sportsmen for Habitat (ISH), supports the wolf plan and feels the delisting of wolves is over due. ISH is concerned with the mule deer change from 5 bucks per 100 does to 15. Need to take immediate action on the 5 buck ratio if it falls below the numbers. ISH is concerned about highway kills near the Rocky Point / Montpelier area. Unit 77 needs some action taken. Mr. Larsen appreciates Commissioner Budge and Regional Supervisor, Mark Gamblin efforts. ISH would like to see the numbers cut back for nonresident deer hunters.

David Sexton, self, spoke regarding the distance changed from 200 ft. to 20 ft rule for baiting hound hunting bear for dog protection from the wolves moving in. He would like to see baiting allowed during the pursuit season. Mr. Sexton had a question regarding spot-lighting for raccoons on the river where there are no firearms allowed.

Jim Justice agrees with the Commission actions on muzzleloader approved at the January meeting.

Barry Edmiston, representing self spoke regarding changes for the McCall zone Unit 22 deer. Mr. Edmiston does not like the 2 point deer recommendation. He supports wolf management through hunting.

Billy Killion, representing self, thanked the Commission on their work on the wolf management plan and supports the reduction of wolves through general seasons. Unit 22, 2 point is not in favor of. Suggests moving units 13, 14, 18 to same as other late control seasons, and Hunt 2063 to a late controlled cow tag, and Unit 13 for bighorn sheep.

Kevin O'Hara is angry over the Sawtooth "A" controlled hunt tag.

Michael Scott thanked Department for all of the work done on the mule deer plan and the Commission for implementing part of the plan on the proposed regulations for 2008. He spoke regarding aerial flights for the Pioneer zone. He would like for the Commission to look at "A" tag seasons for bull elk and make reductions in 2009 for the Pioneer zone. Mr. Scott requested the number of nonresident deer tags that were purchased last year.

Nate Jones, of King Hill, Idaho, has concerns with Unit 16; last year was a short range weapon deer season and has been changed back to muzzleloader only season. He is in favor of short range versus muzzleloader. Mr. Jones questioned how the Department collected data for the mule deer plan. He would like to see a holistic plan come together on what people see. Eyes to Acres is a good idea to involve more citizens to assist in collecting data.

Ed Lindahl submitted a letter to be part of the public comment regarding Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan.

Don Pickett provided an email to Commissioner Wright to be submitted as part of the public comment regarding bighorn sheep management.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

March 6

Chairman Wheeler called the meeting to order at 8:10 a.m. with Commissioners Tony McDermott, Fred Trevey, Bob Barowsky, Wayne Wright, Randy Budge and Gary Power present.

MISCELLANEOUS

Review of Public Comment

Commissioners reviewed and discussed the public meeting comments. Appropriate staff will directly answer questions presented. Commission Gary Power commends the public who spoke at the public meeting. Comments and thoughts were in order and presented in a positive manner.

Director's Report

- Director Groen reported that he has completed staff meetings in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4 and McCall; and appreciates the Commission participation in these meetings
- Director Groen has asked Deputy Director Moore and Ray Greene, HR Manager to look at ways to compensate employees living in high cost areas
- The Department and State Parks and Recreation will work on joint legislation for the 2009 session on OHV

- Commends Jim Unsworth and Brian Oakey, Department of Agriculture, for their work on the Interim Sheep Policy Committee
- Department staff presented a briefing on Sage Grouse to the Senate Resource Committee on March 3rd
- Department is working with Cattle Association on sage grouse efforts
- Hunter Education to be offered online soon
- Budget Hearing JFAC March 3rd
 - JFAC decided to restore \$50,000 for shooting ranges and \$205,000 license funds back to the Wildlife Bureau budget
- Distributed the Departments 2008 Direction to Commission (Appendix 41, Exhibit 29)

Speaking Engagements:

- Idaho Environmental Educational Association Conference, March 1st
 - Theme of the conference was “How Can Our Idaho Communities Reconnect Children to Nature”
- Idaho Weed Conference on January 30th
- March 7th “Respiratory Disease in Wild and Domestic Sheep”
 - Participated with Department of Agriculture Director, Celia Gould

Commission Reports

Each Commissioner provided a Regional update report.

Salmon Region, Commissioner Power:

- Core of Engineers mandates that all levees and dikes free of vegetation
 - Staff working hard to restore vegetation back to the stream banks because of thermal problems
 - The city of Salmon has removed all trees along the city park
 - Regional Supervisors working with Fisheries to see if there is any leeway
- Concern for employees living in high cost areas
 - How the Department could compensate these employees
 - Difficult to recruit employees due to the high cost living area
- 1200 acre ranch near Pahsimeroi purchased by conservation buyers
 - Tremendous asset for the Department
- Wolf controversy in East Fork Unit 36B
- Fisheries continues to work on reconnects
- Possible new Greenfield hunts in the Pahsimeroi area
- Green field hunts were designed to assist individuals who do not want elk on property
 - Early controlled option for this area creating a list of individuals

Panhandle Region, Tony McDermott:

- Snow level has been above normal this year

- Opportunity to spend 3 days with mountain lion hunter training dogs in the Priest Lake area during the pursuit season
- Reports seeing 50 white tail deer and 10-15 moose in good condition
- Will have some winter kill but do not anticipate it to be a major issue
- Deep snow has pushed many moose into communities, roads, and railroad tracks
- 150 moose killed by trains and roadways this winter
- Fishing activity is picking up on Lake Pend Oreille
- Ned Horner, Regional Fisheries Manager is retiring after 28 years with the Department
- USFS has begun work on their Travel Plan
 - Chip Corsi, Regional Supervisor will serve on the steering committee
- Proposed development at the mouth of Trestle Creek (high end condominiums and a marina)
 - Department has provided technical services

Clearwater Region, Fred Trevey:

- Reports that there will be a good return for spring chinook with lots of fish
- Finished Elk City elk zone flight survey
- 12 bighorn sheep have been radio collared in Units 14 and 19
 - Provides good data and population information
- Depredation is a challenge in the Palouse area
- Participating on the “Clearwater Collaborative”
 - Interests are public lands, habitat, and public access
 - Patterned on the Crapo Elk Initiative

Magic Valley Region, Wayne Wright:

- Expresses appreciation to the Magic Valley Region staff for their work in the Region
- Reports average winter for the region
- Monitoring the condition of deer and elk mortalities
- 150-200 mule deer have been hit by trains
- Mid winter elk counts were flown in Unit 49
- Elk feeding operations continue in the South Fork Boise River drainage
- Statewide concern over the potential interaction between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep on federal grazing allotment
- Deer counts in Units 55 and 56 are 4,000 plus
- Ice fishing has been very good for perch in Magic Reservoir and rainbow trout in Salmon Falls Creek Reservoir
- Fire rehabilitation efforts wrapped up in mid February on the Murphy Complex Fire
- Welcome two new officers Clint Roger and Doug Meyer

Southwest Region, Bob Barowsky:

- Boise enforcement district implemented a multi-pronged enforcement effort to reduce deer road kills through the winter range area along Highway 21 Northeast of Boise
- Media release to the public via newspaper and television advising the public about deer presence along highway 21
- Youth mentored pheasant hunt on private shooting range
 - Coordinated with the Boise Police Department
- Al Marion represents the Winter Feeding Advisory Committee in the Garden Valley Area
- Ice fishing has been slow on Lake Cascade
- March will be a busy month for volunteers planting bitterbrush and sagebrush
- The Region has been working with consultants on the Cartwright Ranch Planned Community
 - Fish and Game's role is to provide a technical review of the Wildlife Mitigation Plan
 - The Region is looking at ways to be reimbursed for technical services being provided

Southeast Region, Randy Budge:

- Four scoping meetings for season setting regulations were held in the Region and were well attended
 - Mule deer is the main concern with people
 - Some questions on elk numbers there seems to be a decline
 - Region will take a careful look at this
- Thanks to Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Wright and their regional supervisors for their concerted efforts in dealing with the mule deer initiative review
- Important to be inclusive with the sportsmen groups help them become part of the solution
- Will not remove the 4 point recommendation in Unit 73
- 14 Winter feeding sites going on at this time
 - The Winter Feeding Advisory Committee process is working well
- Road mortality is high on Highway 30 near Kemmer, Idaho
- Plans for Urbanized Fishing Pond in Pocatello is moving forward
- Expansion of the Regional Office has been approved
- Dick Scully has retired as Regional Fish Manager
- New development on critical deer winter habitat in Unit 78
 - Staff is working with developer

Upper Snake, Steve Schmidt, Regional Supervisor, for Cameron Wheeler:

- Winter feeding in Swan Valley, Teton Valley and the Sand Creek Winter Range
 - Purchased 52 tons of deer pellets

- Expected to feed until the end of March
- USBOR will contribute 10 days of helicopter time to locate sage grouse leks in the Eastern Idaho Uplands
- Idaho has received its brucellosis free status for 2007
- Fremont Comprehensive Management Plan
 - Requires developer to submit a habitat management plan which is intended to show how they will protect fish and wildlife habitat at the development
 - Require developers to submit a mitigation plan to show how developers will mitigate for unavoidable losses of fish and wildlife habitat
- Participating in Island Park Strategy Team lead by Forest Supervisor, Larry Timchak
 - Island Park strategy team to identify opportunities to protect key pieces of fish and wildlife property in the Island Park Area
- BPA will contribute \$250,000 in 2008 and \$250,000 in 2009 to build fish weirs to keep Yellowstone cutthroats separate from Rainbows in South Fork tributaries

MISCELLANEOUS

Consent Calendar

08-27 Commissioner Barowsky moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE FINANCIAL REPORT IN THE CONSENT CALENDAR. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

MANAGEMENT PLANS AND POLICES

Mule Deer Management Plan

Brad Compton, Wildlife Game Manager, presented the Mule Deer Management Plan. Mr. Compton stated that in 2006 the Department began revising the Idaho Mule Deer Management Plan. Central to this revision was a statewide mule deer hunter survey conducted by the University of Idaho. Results from the public survey were used to draft proposed statewide direction for mule deer management. Incorporating input from regional public meetings ('sounding boards'), the Department developed a draft for Commission review in November.

Between mid-November and December 31, the Department solicited public comment on the draft plan and modified the plan in early January. In January 2008, the Commission delayed adoption of the plan to allow additional refinement and review by the public.

Department staff refined the January draft to incorporate Commission direction including:

- 1) clarified the 2008 rules will be annual; and indicating biennial rules are a goal to be considered in future years
- 2) established a goal of ≥ 15 bucks per 100 does in general hunt units

- 3) clarified that no specific management tools are prescribed in the plan; allowing Commission flexibility
- 4) modified predator management language to mimic language used in the new 10(j) rule

Species management plans provide overall direction to the Department, and functionally represent “action plans” referenced in the Department strategic plan (*The Compass*). Species management plans do not have statutory or administrative rule authority, but do represent Commission policy and provide guidance to the Department on implementing management actions and developing rule recommendations.

The statewide mule deer hunter survey provided the initial opportunity for public involvement. Additionally, the Department hosted several regional meetings (‘sounding boards’) to solicit feedback for preparation of the draft management plan. The Department also hosted a Mule Deer Workshop in Pocatello, with many of the comments used to shape the draft plan.

All regions provided opportunities (breakfast meetings, open houses, or public meetings) to comment on the draft mule deer management plan. Additionally, the Department made the plan available through the website for public review and comment.

Mr. Compton noted other changes that were made to the plan:

The terms for hunting opportunity will be referred to as general, quality and high quality; the word trophy has been removed; on page 21, second column, second paragraph under performance targets maintain buck: doe ratios above the biological minimum (=5 bucks /100 does) will be removed.

Staff recommends adoption of the “Idaho Mule Deer Management Plan, 2008-2017.”

08-28 Commissioner Wright moved and Commissioner Budge seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THE “IDAHO MULE DEER MANAGEMENT PLAN, 2008-2017.” The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan

Steve Nadeau, Large Carnivore Program Manager stated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a delisting rule on wolves at the end of February 2008. Idaho will take over management 30 days after publication. The Department developed a Draft Wolf Population Management Plan that outlined regulated wolf harvest and population management. The plan went out for public comment and was rewritten and finalized in February. Additionally, basic wolf hunting rules developed for the Plan were presented at the regional open houses in February.

The Plan is ready for Commission decision on adoption. Commission sets 2008 statewide population goals at its May meeting. Idaho assumes full management authority

March 28. Draft proposed 2008 wolf hunting seasons available for public review in May. Commission decides on final wolf hunting seasons, quotas, rules, etc. in May. Final wolf hunting rules brochure will be available in July.

A broad-based 7 member stakeholder group was formed to help develop the plan. A public survey was conducted of 1000 Idaho citizens, 1000 hunters, and 1000 livestock producers. The public comment period on the Plan ran 43 days from November 19 through December 31. Ten public open houses were held around the state in November and December and the public was requested to comment on the wolf plan either online or in writing. Staff met with the Nez Perce Tribe and comments were incorporated from a broad base of constituents. General overview of rules was presented during the public big game open houses in all regions. The public will be able to review quotas and rules prior to Commission adoption in May.

The Department level of management planning and implementation has increased over the last few years, and will continue to do so. The transition to full state management has been ongoing since 2002 and the Department is now prepared to take over management of wolves as a big game animal upon adoption of Idaho's wolf harvest and population management strategies. The final stages are nearing completion with Commission approval during the next few months.

Staff recommendation is to adopt the Wolf Population and Management Plan 2008-2012. Select 2005, 2006, or 2007 population levels to manage for 2008 harvest goals. Direct staff to allocate quotas on the final wolf brochure and rules for final adoption in May.

Mr. Nadeau provided a power point presentation (Appendix 41, Exhibit 30) reviewing the Wolf Population Management Plan:

- Goals of the plan
- Ensure that populations are maintained at 2005-2007 population levels (518-732 wolves) 5 years
- Ensure the long-term viability of the gray wolf population
- Management tools
- General Seasons
- Harvest Quotas
- Controlled Hunt
- Tag quotas
- Tools not allowed at any time
- Poison for wolves not allowed under EPA rules
- Aerial hunting for sport harvest of any big game animal including wolves not allowed
- Livestock depredation Management
- Landowner Sportsmen Coordinators and wolf biologist work with producers
- Proactive nonlethal where appropriate
- Compensation Program (Advisory Council)
- Nez Perce Tribal Harvest

- 35 % - 50 % of allowable harvest in treaty hunting area based on surplus under MOU
- Monitoring
- Monitoring of packs and BPs mandatory
- Must ensure > 15 BP to FWS annually
- Mandatory 24 hour reporting of harvest (quotas)
- Financial Plan
- Continue to request federal funds
- Increase in State funds from tags
- Focus on monitoring
- Harvest Rules and Allocation Mockup
- Mr. Nadeau distributed a draft brochure of 2008 wolf seasons (Appendix 41, exhibit 31)

Commissioner McDermott stated in his review of the State Plan and the Idaho Wolf Management Plan that the food habits (Appendix 41, Exhibit 32) of the wolf was not listed in the plan. Commissioner McDermott feels this is important information based on scientific studies to add this to the plan.

08-29 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Trevey seconded a motion TO INCLUDE THE FOOD HABITS OF THE WOLF IN THE IDAHO WOLF POPULATION MANAGEMENT PLAN ON PAGE 13 UNDER THE IMPACTS OF BIG GAME POPULATIONS. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Commissioner Trevey stated that from the perspective of consistency he would like to suggest that the final plan be consistent and the title page being a Department plan, as well as acknowledgements to be listed as appendices within the appendix.

The Commission feels this is the most emotional and controversial decision it has faced. Chairman Wheeler commends the Commission, Director Groen and staff for their efforts on the Idaho Wolf Population Management Plan.

08-30 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion TO APPROVE THE DEPARTMENT'S IDAHO WOLF POPULATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AS PROPOSED WITH THE ADDITION OF THE FOOD HABITS AND THE EXCEPTIONS NOTED OVER THE LAST THREE DAYS ON THE PART OF THE COMMISSION AND THAT STEVE NADEAU USE HIS GOOD JUDGMENT AND ADD THE COMMISSIONER COMMENTS WHERE APPROPRIATE. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

LEGISLATION

Legislative Update

Sharon Kiefer, Intergovernmental Policy Coordinator, provided a Legislative update to the Commission. Ms. Kiefer noted that House Joint Resolution No.3 the constitutional

right to hunt, fish, trap and harvest replaces HJR 2. The Department provided technical testimony to the House Resources and Conservation Committee on March 3, (Appendix 41, Exhibit 33).

Ms. Kiefer reported SB 1449 navigational Encroachment raises the penalties IDL would charge for environmental harm largely for lakes.

Ms. Kiefer provided status updates of legislative bills (Appendix 41, Exhibit 34). She noted Senate Bills 1265 and 1267 have been signed. SB 1374 wolf depredation control has been sent to the House for an amending order stating an emergency clause to be added.

REPORT

Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Report

Gayle Valentine, Executive Director, briefed the Commission on Idaho Fish and Wildlife (IFWF) activities.

- The Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Land Consultant closed on two 20-acre parcel conservation easements adjacent the Big Wood River. The easements provide excellent habitat for a large population of elk in the Wood River Valley.
- Thirty-five trips have been confirmed for the March 2008 Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation Online Trip Auction. We exceeded our goal of 30 trips. The auction begins at 6:00 am, Mountain Daylight Savings Time on Friday, March 14, 2008 and ends at 9:00 pm Mountain Daylight Savings Time on Monday, March 24, 2008.
- The Foundation welcomes two new board members – Chuck Goodenough from Region 3 and Gary Bills from Region 5. The Foundation now totals 17 board members representing all seven regions of the state.
- The Foundation held their winter board meeting on February 2, 2008 at the Idaho Department of Fish and Game headquarters. Board members voted and approved project funding for five out of 8 projects of which 4 are Idaho Department of Fish and Game projects. Announcements will be made by early March 2008. Our annual meeting will be held in Jerome on April 18 & 19, 2008.
- The Foundation Board voted to approve the Foundation's Land Policy. Copies are available upon request

FISCAL

Budget FY10

Jim Lau, Chief of Administration, provided a brief update on the Department FY10 budget. He distributed a budget direction worksheet (Appendix 41, Exhibit 35) to the Commission. Mr. Lau noted that the last fee increase (10%) was effective of FY 2006. The Department will ask for a fee increase for FY 2010. The Department asked for feed back from the Commission in three areas 1) are there initiatives the Commission would like the Department to address for the FY 2010 budget; 2) comfort level in asking for a fee increase in the range of 15 – 20 %; 3) direction to obtain general funds.

Director Groen reviewed the budget direction worksheet with the Commission and highlighted areas of concern for the Department. He noted Bill Hutchinson would be working on an internal efficiency study for the Department. Director Groen noted that the Department provides a variety of services that go beyond hunting and fishing.

Commission consensus is for the Department to proceed with the FY 2010 budget plan based on a 15-20 % fee increase and giving the Director guidance to pursue general funds.

RULES

Big Game: Deer, Elk, Antelope, Bear, Mountain Lion

Brad Compton, State Big Game Manager, presented the Department 2008 big game season recommendations for deer, elk, pronghorn, black bear and mountain lion tags (Appendix 41, Exhibit 36) and (Appendix 41, Exhibit 37). Included in the presentation were reports on Mandatory Harvest Report, Winter Feeding Update, Deer & Elk Over-Winter Survival Update and Regional Big Game Issues and Recommendations.

A summary of recommended changes includes:

DEER

- Recommend changes consistent with the new mule deer management plan.
- Increase 'quality' and 'high-quality' mule deer hunting opportunity.
- Reduce antlerless mule deer hunting opportunity to address population changes and new mule deer management direction
- Adjust antlerless white-tailed deer hunting opportunity to address depredations (Clearwater & Upper Snake regions) and anticipated over-winter survival (Panhandle Region).
- Convert short-range weapon hunts to muzzleloader only.
- Provide additional youth opportunity.

ELK

- Reduce antlerless hunting opportunity to address population declines.
- Increase antlerless hunting opportunity to address depredations in the Clearwater Region.
- Adjust antlered controlled hunt permit levels in response to population changes.
- Convert short-range weapon hunts to muzzleloader only.
- Provide additional youth opportunity.

PRONGHORN

- Provide additional youth opportunity.

BLACK BEAR

- Increase hunting opportunity in Upper Snake Region.

MOUNTAIN LION

- Standardize dogs-prohibited season dates in Southeast Region.

Mr. Compton referenced the Department recommendations for Landowner Appreciation Permits (LAP) (Appendix 41, Exhibit 38). The Department is recommending that those hunts converting from general to controlled to implement a LAP hunt at 10 %, any changes in a corresponding controlled hunt whether or up down make those changes proportional to the LAP hunt. The only exception is in Unit 45 where the Department is recommending going back to 25 %. Mr. Compton noted the Department went down to 10 % to allow some additional landowners tags for a pilot project Access Yes. The Department is proposing to restore that full allocation.

Mr. Compton covered corrections to the Big Game Season recommendations presented to the Commission in their agenda packet.

Commission discussion followed on outfitter allocations (Appendix 41, Exhibit 39).

08-31 Commissioner Budge moved and Commissioner Power seconded a motion TO ACCEPT THIS AS THE 2008 OUTFITTER ALLOCATION COMMISSION POSITION DATED MARCH 6, 2008.

WHEREAS, THE DEPARTMENT IS PROPOSING SIGNIFICANT REDUCTIONS IN SEVERAL ELK HUNTS WITH CORRESPONDING REDUCTIONS IN OUTFITTER ALLOCATION; AND

WHEREAS, IMPLEMENTATION OF THESE RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD PLACE A FINANCIAL HARDSHIPS ON AFFECTED OUTFITTERS AND ASSOCIATED RURAL COMMUNITIES, AND ALSO AFFECT SEVERAL HUNTERS ALREADY SCHEDULED TO USE THE SERVICES OF AN OUTFITTER; AND

WHEREAS, ELK POPULATION CHANGES THAT PRECIPITATED THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS ARE NOT BIOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES; AND

WHEREAS, IDAHO CODE 36-408 PROVIDES COMMISSION AUTHORITY TO ALLOCATE DEER OR ELK TAGS FOR USE BY HUNTERS THAT HAVE ENTERED INTO AGREEMENTS WITH OUTFITTERS; AND

WHEREAS, IDAHO (RULE 505.01) ADMINISTRATIVE CODE 13.01.04.505.01 ALLOWS THE COMMISSION TO IMPLEMENT REDUCTIONS IN OUTFITTER ALLOCATION OF WHICH EXCEED 20 % OVER A 3-YEAR PERIOD;

THEREFORE, IT IS THE POSITION OF THE IDAHO FISH AND GAME COMMISSION TO PHASE IN IMPLEMENTATION OF DEPARTMENT PROPOSED REDUCTIONS ON OUTFITTER ALLOCATION OF ELK TAGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 505.01 WITH NO REDUCTION OCCURRING DURING 2008 AND REMAINING REDUCTION BEING IMPLEMENTED OVER

THE FOLLOWING TWO YEARS 2009 AND 2010. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

Mr. Compton stated that the Department needs to do additional work and therefore pulls the recommendation to create antlerless outfitter allocation hunts.

08-32 Commissioner Wright moved and Commissioner Barowsky seconded a motion TO ADOPT BY PROCLAMATION, THE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS AS PRESENTED FOR THE 2008 BIG GAME SEASONS FOR DEER, ELK, PRONGHORN, BEAR AND MOUNTAIN LION FOR ALL SEVEN REGIONS INCLUDING OUTFITTER ALLOCATIONS AS AMENDED IN PREVIOUS DISCUSSION. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

REPORT

Update on 2008 Spring/ Summer Chinook Salmon

Pete Hassemer, Anadromous Fish Manager provided an update (Appendix 41, Exhibit 40). Mr. Hassemer stated that this update is an explanation, to inform the Commission, of the forecasts for spring and summer Chinook salmon returning to the Snake River this spring. The pre-season forecast, presented to the Commission at its January meeting, of the number of fish returning to the Snake River has not been updated. Fisheries staff will be reporting the expected geographic distribution of returning hatchery fish, sport fisheries planned for 2008 and timelines, considerations and permitting processes necessary for opening the sport fisheries. The scheduling of an April 2008 Commission conference call to adopt 2008 spring/summer Chinook salmon seasons will be discussed.

MISCELLANEOUS

Hunter Ed Instructor Awards

Dan Papp, Regional Wildlife Educator; and Commissioner Barowsky presented the awards to Don Hyde and Guy Manley.

Don Hyde from Boise, Idaho was certified as a Region 3 hunter education instructor in October of 1988. He had previously been a hunter education instructor for 22 years in Minnesota. During his 20 years of volunteer service to Idaho's Hunter Education Program, Don was the lead instructor for 17 classes in which he certified 297 students. He assisted in 51 additional classes certifying an additional 1234 students.

Guy Manley from Givens Hot Springs, Idaho has been a certified hunter education instructor since June of 1994. Since then Don has served as the lead instructor in 36

classes certifying 491 students and assisted with 3 additional classes that certified another 65 students.

This year both reached the highest Instructor Service Incentive Award level of 35,000 points based on their volunteer service to the Hunter Education Program.

MISCELLANEOUS

Executive Session

08-33 Commissioner McDermott moved and Commissioner Trevey seconded a motion TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION, PURSUANT TO IDAHO CODE 67-2345 (1) (C) TO DISCUSS LAND ACQUISITIONS. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

08-34 Commissioner Wright moved and Commissioner McDermott seconded a motion TO COME OUT OF EXECUTIVE SESSION. The motion carried in a unanimous vote.

The session ended at 4:40 p.m. and no official action taken.

Cameron Wheeler
Chairman

Cal Groen
Secretary